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# THE RAGTIMER

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 1979

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THE RAGTIME SOCIETY

DEDICATED TO THE
PRESERVATION OF
CLASSICAL RAGTIME

## RECENT PERIODICAL ARTICLES OF INTEREST TO RAGTIMERS

Klee, Joe H. "Man of Rags." The Mississippi Rag, June 1979, pp. 11-12. This is a profile of Ragtimer Dave Jasen.

Rapaport, Diane Sward. "Making and Selling Your Own Record; A Step-by-Step Guide to Musical Independence." Contemporary Keyboard, July 1979, pp. 14-16, 19-20, 22, 24. This article covers all angles. It might be of value to Ragtimers who want to put out their own records.

## JAZZ FESTIVALS

November 2-4, 1979. Festival of Traditional Jazz. (190 West 15th Street, Chicago Heights, Illinois 60411).

First weekend in December. Manassas Jazz Festival, Manassas, Virginia. (Johnson McRee, Box 458, Manassas, Va. 22110).

Late January 1980. Old Jazz Meeting, Warsaw, Poland. (For details, write Jazz Forum, Nowogrodzka 49, 00-695 Warsaw, Poland).

Late April 1980. New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival. (For details, write P. O. Box 2430, New Orleans, La. 70176).

May 1980. Coon-Sanders Reunion. Uptowner Inn, Huntington, West Virginia.

Late May 1980. International Oude Stijl Jazz Festival. Breda, Holland.

Late May 1980. Sacramento Jubilee. Old Sacramento, Calif. 95814.

## NEW RECORDINGS

"Ragtime Back to Back." Bill Albright and Bill Bolcom. Musical Heritage Society. MHS 4022K. $3.95 (plus $1.25 for shipping and handling).
Tex Wyndham reviewed this lp in the November/December 1978 Ragtimer. Albright plays rags by Hayden-Joplin and Marshall-Joplin, and Bolcom plays pieces by James P. Johnson. Besides this MHS lp, which is less expensive than the original lp, a Dolbyized cassette is also available, for $4.95 plus $1.25 for shipping and handling.

"The Phoenix Symphony Ragtime Ensemble." World Jazz Records (4350 East Camelback Road, Phoenix, Arizona 85108). WJLP-12.
This is one of the few fully orchestrated rag LP's available.

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# RAGTIME...
# UNDER YOUR HAT

FOUNDED 1962
INCORPORATED 1970

THE RAGTIME SOCIETY
INCORPORATED

is a non - profit corporation having the following objects:

To preserve classical ragtime music and to pursue such other activities as shall serve to maintain and develop interest in classical ragtime music and music related thereto.

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Dean Tudor

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

As the Bash approaches (and indeed, it may have come and gone by the time you read this), we can't help being more aware than usual of the amount of work required to keep the Society in motion. Consequently, we'd like to make one more plea for help from all you wonderful ragtime lovers!

In order to keep the Ragtimer up to date, and to make it as useful as possible to our members, we need current information on performers, concerts, records, books, and tours. We need reports of things that have happened (such as concerts), and information on things that are going to happen (as far ahead as possible, please). Performers, we love to hear from you, to learn where and when your next gig will be, who you'll be playing with, what plans you have for the coming months! Drop us a card and we'll spread the word. And those of you who, like us, are not performers, please don't be bashful about sending us ragtime news from your area. If your local paper announces a coming ragtime event, let us know about it! Or if you'd like to share your comments about a recent concert or record or whatever, we'd like to receive them.

We're relying on all of you to keep us au courant, so please don't let us down!

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# RECORD REVIEW

by
TEX
WYNDHAM

Euphonic EES-101 'Messin' Around, Volume One', hand-played nickelodeon rolls

Sources and selections: Capital Nickelodeon Roll #2169 - My Baby (a); Nicaraugua Blues (a); A Good Man Is Hard To Find (a); Gotta Be Booked Blues (b); I Wish You Would (b); Chicago Blues; Ain't Gonna Run You Down (a); Hoo Doo Blues (c); Trombone Blues; Comin' Home Blues (a). Capital Nickelodeon Roll #2254 - Better Cut That Out; Limehouse Blues; Function Blues (d); It's All Worn Out; When Grandpa Steps Out (a); Forty Blues (a); Sugar Dew Blues (a); Houston Blues (b); Carolina Stomp (a); Messin' Around (a).

Euphonic EES-102 'Messin' Around, Volume Two', hand-played nickelodeon rolls

Sources and selections: Capital Nickelodeon Roll #2301 - Dyin' With The Blues (b); When You're On Your Last Go-Round; Moanin' The Blues (b); It's All Over Now (b); Love Ain't Nothin' But The Blues; I Won't Give You None (a); Have Mercy (b); Graveyard Bound (b); Corn Trimmers (b); That's Your Yass, Yass, Yass (b). Capital Nickelodeon Roll #2310 - Black Gal Make It Thunder (a); Mama's Got 'Em (a); The Folks Downstairs (a); That's My Business (a); Underworld Blues (a); Steppin' On The Gas (a); The Bye Bye Blues (b); Farm House Blues (a); Five O'Clock Stomp (b).

Probable personnel, as assigned by Ed Sprankle, who wrote the liner notes, and Mike Montgomery, who provided background research: Selections market '(a)' - Jimmie Blythe; '(b)' - Clarence Johnson; '(c)' - Harry Geise; '(d)' - duet between Blythe and unknown pianist; other titles unknown.

Available separately from Euphonic Sound Recording Co., 357 Leighton Drive, Ventura, California 93001. Price per Lp believed to be $7.95 postpaid in U.S., plus 50¢ overseas.

These two albums give ragtimers an opportunity to assess and enjoy the playing, unhampered by the sometimes scratchy surfaces of their old 78s, of two top-drawer, swinging pianists underrepresented in solo recordings. Although Jimmie Blythe and Clarence Johnson are on the shadowy side as far as surviving data are concerned, Blythe is an historically important figure due to his presence on many jazz, blues vocal, and skiffle sessions in Chicago during the 1920s with Louis Armstrong, Johnny Dodds, and other prominent black jazzmen.

As these brief selections demonstrate (in order to get ten-or-so tunes onto one roll, thus providing suitable variety for the coin-operated pianos in local watering holes, performances were held to about 1-3/4 minutes each), Blythe was a one-man rhythm section, turning out propulsive two-fisted stuff that carries you along with its optimistic mood and back-roomy flavor. Johnson is a relatively more

sophisticated player, combining Chicago's bluesy approach with rich Harlem licks picked up during a sojourn in Gotham, his solos emerging as consistently satisfying and surprising.

Most of the numbers are obscurities, a further plus for the collector, all delivered briskly and buoyantly (in spite of the frequent, sometimes misleading use of the term 'blues' in the titles). While a few are enhanced via the addition of extra notes to create that characteristically big piano roll sound, in general we hear the undiluted artist at work, and that's more than enough given the talent at the keyboard.

102 contains the bulk of the Johnson material, but Blythe is, I think, in a little better form on 101 than on 102. No matter - with such marvelous tickling so well recorded and packaged with a fact-filled booklet of pertinent information, no piano roll buff could fail to be delighted by both Lps, and the same can be said for any ragophile not incurably wedded to the most formal 'classical' styles. Highly recommended.

* * *

Prairie Home Companion 34817 'Butch Thompson', piano solos

Selections: Ragtime Oriole, Blueberry Rhyme, Keep Off The Grass, Original Jelly Roll Blues, Ain't Misbehavin', Little Wonder, Sweet Lorraine, Jersey Sweet, Tishomingo Blues, Snowy Mornin' Blues, Fickle Fay Creep, Carolina Shout.

Available @ $6.00 (checks should be made payable to 'Minnesota Public Radio') from Butch Thompson, KSJN, 400 Sibley Street, St. Paul, Minnesota 55101.

Butch Thompson covers a solid chunk of the ragtime waterfront in these twelve solos, including jingling country rag ('Wonder', a rollicking Thompson original with nicely-stacked 2nd-strain syncopations), classic ('Oriole', a shade on the stiff side), Jelly Roll and Harlem stride. Having the ability to improvise convincingly and naturally in the styles of Morton and James P. Johnson, Butch gives their compositions thoughtful, clean and sensitive interpretations that hold your interest even though he, understandably, offers a little less flag-waving abandon than these great pianists put into their own versions of their famous showpieces. Thompson's explorations of the three pop tunes are particularly absorbing, as he keeps the melody on hand, rolls out a comfortable, steady beat, and ties it all together by interweaving ideas that draw on the various rag approaches displayed in more pristine form in the other numbers. An intelligent player who knows his roots and knows how to swing, in action on a worthwhile if slightly reserved session.

* * *

RCA XRL 1-3212 'Mostly Fats' by The Canadian Brass

Selections: Grandpa's Spells, Honeysuckle Rose, Spreadin' Rhythm Around, Mean To Me, Lounging At The Waldorf, Shreveport Stomp, I've Got A Feeling I'm

Falling, Alligator Crawl, Carolina Shout, Black And Blue, The Jitterbug Waltz, Lookin' Good But Feelin' Bad, Ain't Misbehavin', Handful Of Keys, Just A Closer Walk With Thee.

Personnel: Frederic Mills, Ronald Romm, trumpets; Graeme Page, French horn; Eugene Watts, trombone; Charles Daellenbach, tuba.

Following up their album devoted in large part to Scott Joplin (Boot BMC 3004, reviewed in this column January/February 1976, and which apparently has reappeared as Vanguard VSD 79420), The Canadian Brass take on Fats Waller (mostly), again turning out novel, spirited and accomplished versions of selections that you might not have expected to translate so well from rent-party piano to 'legitimate' brass quintet. 'Handful', for example, is as rousing as ever in a marvelously conceived chart, four horns crisply jumping into a harmonized reading of those typically Wallerish triplets that are tough enough even for a pianist at this speed; Morton's 'Shreveport' swirls through a trumpet-soprano trumpet 2nd-theme chase over an honest-to-goodness stride bass created by the other three voices; and the careful attention to dynamics on James P. Johnson's 'Carolina' brings out the pianistic call-response flavor of the piece's later portions. Although you get only five notes rather than ten fingers, arrangements are (1) so skillfully done that your mind fills in everything you need, and (2) executed with such elan and blended sonority that everything sweeps by like a breath of fresh air. Side Two contains some tamer, less inventive tracks, but by the time you reach them, you'll be enjoying yourself so much you probably won't care.

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RECORD REVIEW

"Ragtime Texas" (Henry Thomas). Herwin 209.

Henry Thomas, born in 1874, was only six years younger than Scott Joplin. On this album he performs two syncopated "coon songs": "Honey Won't You Allow Me One More Chance?" and "Arkansas." Although he recorded from 1927 to 1979, these songs are performed in an archaic folk style and are perhaps our only examples of authentic black folk-rag song performances in existence. The syncopations sound at times like field hollers and the steady ragtime rhythm provided by his guitar results in a sound totally unlike the tinny ragtime song-style sometimes heard.

- Mike Hursey

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KINGSVILLE, ONTARIO, RAGTIMERS SOUGHT: Mrs. Patricia Burlow, a new member of the Ragtime Society, wonders whether there are any other members near Kingsville, Ontario. Anyone interested in getting in touch with Mrs. Burlow can write her at 220 Prince Albert, Kingsville, Ontario N9Y 1J7.

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CONCERT REVIEW

## 15TH ANNUAL NATIONAL RAGTIME FESTIVAL

For Society members who've regularly attended the Bash, the 1979 St. Louis Ragfest, held June 11-17 aboard the Goldenrod Showboat (and the Inaugural, moored next door, used for the last four nights so that, for one admission - about $9 - you got access to seven bandstands of simultaneous music), was a little like Old Home Week. On the bill were pianists from various Bashes - Ben Conroy and Charlie Booty, grinding down boogie n' blues; Dave Jasen, usually with washboardist Mike Schwimmer, steaming through hard-hitting, all-but-forgotten rags; Mike Montgomery and Tom Shea at the 88 with various pickup jazz groups; Terry Waldo, leading his earthy seven-piece Gutbucket Syncopators; Trebor Tichenor, piano, Al Stricker, banjo/vocal, and Glen Meyer, clarinet, with the rest of the rollicking St. Louis Ragtimers; and myself, playing and singing rag songs in solo sets, plus adding a cornet to some of the spots that had been left open for impromptu jamming. In addition, the lounge piano got warmed up by some visiting firemen, including composer George Foley and novelty soloist George Hicks, both regulars at our Cara Inn weekends, while the Toronto-based Climax Jazz Band scored high with the Wednesday-to-Saturday crowds with its clean, well-integrated jazz.

Incredibly, the foregoing was just the tip of the iceberg at the biggest and best yet of the St. Louis functions. Other recording artist/ticklers included Pete Clute, pianist with Turk Murphy 's Jazz Band which headlined each night's program; Jeanne Kittrell in Blues Emporium, a trio equally spotlighting her engaging vocals and "Big John" Becker's incredible banjoizing; soloist Dave Roberts, playing both his own compositions and a classic repertoire; and Jim Dapogny, with a broad bag of accomplished Morton and Harlem stride piano. And for rag you haven't heard on disc, there were straightforward performances by Rod Bienson and Mary Green (the latter often found in an understated rag quartet with her husband, cornetist Lew Green, who was otherwise at the helm of the free-swinging festival favorites, the Salty Dogs jazz band), brisk rags by local professors Dan Peelor and Tom McDermott (at least once, Tom had a violin and banjo in tow, ripping through some country-flavored rag arrangements), vocals and rags by Hank Troy, and more.

Double incredibly, even though these performances provided more ragtime than the average human could catch up to in only six nights of seven-hour programs (I didn't get to hear Bienson, Troy, or Bob Opal as much as I'd initially planned), they're only part of the festival, and maybe the smaller part at that because the longer sets (45 minutes or 1 hour) were allocated among the 15 bands on hand. Fans who like their jazz hot and punchy could savor cornetist Ernie Carson's Capital City Jazz Band, Wisconsin's Riverboat Ramblers, or clarinetist Jim Beatty's outfit from Portland. If you lean toward the more laid-back, uptown New Orleans style, try the Hall Brothers New Orleans Jazz Band from Minnesota or the Cakewalkin' Jass Band from Toledo. Or if tightly executed charts are your bag, dig the good-natured Tarnished Six from Pennsylvania or the Royal Society Jazz Orchestra, in from

California to recreate the 1920s dance bands with skill and hilarity.

With all that talent around, one couldn't help but have a ball. In fact, so much good stuff was going on at once that when you met your friends between sets and began telling them of the fabulous show they just missed, too often they'd be right back at you with the same story from some other stage. This was my fifth year as a St. Louis performer, and I still can't quite learn how to end up the week with enough of certain artists. Maybe it's impossible, but it sure is fun trying.

- Tex Wyndham

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## TRADITIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL

On November 2, 3, and 4, 1979, a "Festival of Traditional Jazz" will be held at the Holiday Inn-O'Hare/Kennedy, 5440 North River Road, Rosemont, Illinois (just minutes from O'Hare Airport). The "Honored Guest Artist" of the Festival will be Milt "The Judge" Hinton, jazz bassist.

The program promises to cover all kinds of traditional jazz, including ragtime, "jelly roll," swing, New Orleans, New York, Chicago, and '20s and '30s big band jazz. A list of 22 big names (among them Dick Hyman and Terry Waldo) indicates the high level of artistry that can be expected at the Festival. Special events include tributes to Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, and Jelly Roll Morton (this one performed by Dick Hyman's Perfect Repertory Company from original charts).

Tickets for the entire weekend ("patron package") are $50.00; tickets for individual sessions are available at $10.00 each. Room reservations must be made directly with the O'Hare-Kennedy Holiday Inn (not Holidex). Call toll free (800-323-6864) and ask for the Jazz Fest Package. For tickets to the Festival, write Preservation Jazz Fest Society, 190 West 15th Street, Chicago Heights, Illinois 60411.

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## PRAISE FROM UNEXPECTED QUARTERS

The following comments on ragtime were brought to our attention by Charles B. Davis, Jr.:

"Rag-time, and by this I refer to the peculiar rhythm and not to the bad music that Americans have come to class under this head, has a peculiar fascination for me. There is nothing objectionable about the unique rhythm, any more than there is anything iniquitous about the gypsy melodies that have made

such excellent material for Brahms, Liszt and Sarasate. The fault lies in the clumsy presentation of the matter and its associations with vulgar words. The rhythm is often fascinating and exhilarating. Perhaps some day some American composer will glorify it in the Scherzo of a Symphony." These are the words of Josef Lhevinne, one of the great pianists of the early part of the twentieth century (he made his American debut in 1906). The quotation is taken from James Francis Cooke's Great Pianists on Piano Playing (Theodore Presser, 1913).

Leschetizky As I Knew Him was written by Ethel Newcomb (1875-1959), who was a student of the great pianist and later his assistant. In the book she remembers (p. 247) the words of an American student talking about the professor:

"He likes good stories and I tell him a lot of stuff. I tell him about foreigners coming to America, or about Americans coming back after a long time being Continental in their ways. He loves these stories. Yes and he will listen all night if you play him American tunes and ragtime."

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## DICK HYMAN AT ARTPARK

On August 30, Dick Hyman performed at ArtPark (in Lewiston, New York, right at the southwestern end of Lake Ontario). Dick appeared with the Perfect Jazz Repertory Quintet in a show entitled "An Evening with George Gershwin."

ArtPark, which serves a wide section of upstate, New York, Ontario, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, offers a fine summer theater schedule every year. With a mixture of opera, ballet, jazz, and musical comedy, ArtPark draws large and enthusiastic crowds of music lovers, and we're sure that Dick and his group presented a great show.

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## ERRATUM

Gremlins intervened - in the form of scrawled handwriting, lazy eyes, or scrambled typewriter keys. The result was that the President's Message in the July/August Ragtimer gave "Swansett" Massachusetts as the home of Jack and Eleanor Phelan. It should have been "Swampscott."

And while we're on the subject, we'd like to amplify our information about the Scollay Square Stompers. The Stompers don't have a regular gig at one spot; they play only specials. So those of you in the Boston area should watch your local notices for specific playing dates and locations.

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# EARLY JAZZ ON PHONODISC

by Dean Tudor

This is a continuation of a critical survey of ragtime and early jazz music (see pages 7 - 12 of the July/August Ragtimer for the beginning of the article).

## 2. SOLO PIANO

1. Eubie Blake. The Eighty Six Years of Eubie Blake. two discs. Columbia C2S 847.

2. Eubie Blake. Rags to Classics. Eubie Blake Music. EBM 2.

Blake was just under ninety when he recorded these three discs. He was one of the innovators of ragtime (and a major force in the musical theatre). He created some of the most original rags, including "Chevy Chase" (1914), "Tricky Fingers," and "Charleston Rag" (1899), the latter heard on both sets as recorded in 1921, 1968, and 1971. He has done a lot of adaptative work, and the roots of ragtime are clearly shown in the two Sousa marches "Semper Fidelis" and "Stars and Stripes Forever." One disc of the Columbia twofer is ragtime piano, the other is of his theatre work with (in most cases) Noble Sissle, such as "Memories of You" and "Wild about Harry." Both are superb discs of solo piano. His own company's record, one of a half dozen, presents some new and old creations, such as "Junk Man Rag" and "Pork and Beans" from the great Luckeyth Roberts, and his own "Capricious Harlem" and "You're Lucky to Me."

3. Scott Joplin. Ragtime, v. 2. Biograph BLP 1008 Q.

These classic rags were re-recorded from Joplin piano rolls cut between 1900 and 1910. Mike Montgomery, noted ragtime performer, was in charge of the transcription and he has provided good sound, correct speeds, and excellent notes. Of all the Joplin rolls, these are amongst the best because ragtime was at its peak during these years. Joplin took ill after 1910, and his decline started, both in health and in creativity. Included here are his definitive versions of "The Cascades," "The Gladiolus Rag," "Swipsey Cake Rag," "Stop Time Rag," and ten others.

4. Joseph Lamb. A Study in Classic Ragtime. Folkways FG 3562.

This disc was recorded at Lamb's home in Brooklyn in 1959. Lamb was a white man who everybody thought was black because of his ragtime compositions. He has been ranked with Joplin and Scott as being one of the three most productive, interesting geniuses of ragtime music. Once a protege of Joplin, he reminisces here in interviews concerning James Scott and Scott Joplin. Also included are his versions of his own material: "Cottontail Rag," "Sensation Rag," "Contentment Rag," "Alaskan Rag," and others. Lamb played with unusual depth, despite faltering because of his age. His overall music is usually characterized by rich, warm chords and harmonics.

5. John Arpin. Concert in Ragtime. Scroll LSCR 101 (Canadian issue).

6. John Arpin. The Other Side of Ragtime. Scroll LSCR 103 (Canadian issue).

Both of these discs provide a wealth of variety among their 24 items. Each set has two rags by Joplin, Lamb, and Scott (the big three) plus others by Jelly Roll Morton. There are a few originals such as the "Centennial Rag" (1964). Arpin's light and airy touch is ideally suited for performing ragtime as it was written, and this is no doubt a result of his classically trained background.

7. William Bolcom. Heliotrope Bouquet; Piano Rags, 1900-1970. Nonesuch H 71257.

8. William Bolcom. Pastimes and Piano Rags. Nonesuch H 71299.

James Scott created pyrotechnical ragtime works, the most demanding in all of ragtime; a good example is "Efficiency Rag." Artie Mathews, on the other hand, created dance tempos with some Latin influences and rhythms, most notably the tango. These are revealed in "Pastime Rags, No. 1-5 (A Slow Drag)," where other devices include stop time, slow drags, and barrelhouse movements. Bolcom plays these five Mathews works plus five Scotts with his usual felicity. The Heliotrope Bouquet record encompasses the diverse styles of the main ragtime composers. As a serious musician and composer himself, Bolcom presents literal stylings of Turpin's "A Ragtime Nightmare" and Lamb's "Ethiopia Rag." He also contributes two original rags, "Graceful Ghost" and "Seabiscuit," as well as playing a contemporary selection by William Albright ("Brass Knuckles") and three Joplin pieces that do not duplicate the offerings by Rifkin.

9. Dave Jasen. Fingerbustin' Ragtime. Blue Goose 3001.

There are eight originals by Jasen here, such as "Festival - A Ragtime Cakewalk," "Dave's Rag" (perhaps derived from Morton), a bouncy "Raymond' Rag" and "That American Ragtime Dance," this latter being indicative of the type of commercialism that surrounded ragtime in its declining years. From the eight others are two novelty rags - Zez Confrey's "Kitten on the Keys" and Herbert Ingraham's "Poison Ivy Rag," plus the obligatory "Maple Leaf Rag" and Eubie Blake's "Charleston Rag." The album's title is indicative of the contents, as these are all stomping versions.

10. Max Morath. The Best of Scott Joplin and Other Rag Classics. two discs. Vanguard VSD 39/40.

11. Max Morath. Plays Ragtime. two discs. Vanguard VSD 83/84

These four discs contain diverse materials. The first record of the first set is a concert of ragtime piano from its flowering, 1897-1917. There are seven rags from Joplin, three from Lamb, two from Scott, Turpin's "St. Louis Rag" (written to celebrate the St. Louis Louisiana Purchase Exposition of 1904), and Joe Northup's "The Cannonball," an early example of the novelty rag. Joplin's "Silver Swan" was only discovered in 1970 and is here given a sterling interpretation. The second record of the set is a major document, lovingly performed and nicely recorded in spacious stereo. This is the serious side of Morath, with the expertise of Jim Tyler on banjo plus added guitar and bass. Fantastic renditions of "Slippery

Elm," "A Real Slow Drag," "Ragtime Nightingale," and "The Cascades." Of particular interest is George L. Cobb's "Russian Rag" (1918), a syncopated treatment of one of Rachmaninoff's Preludes. There are excellent liner notes contributed by Rudi Blesh. The second set was a follow-up effort. There are some little-known rags here, and not all of them are by Joplin. James Scott and Joseph Lamb are also included. Some of the originals are in styles, such as Morath's "Golden Hours" and the dedication to Joseph Lamb's wife, "One for Amelia."

12. Knocky Parker. The Complete Works of Scott Joplin. two discs. Audiophile AP 71/2.

13. Knocky Parker. The Complete Works of James Scott. two discs. Audiophile AP 76/7.

14. Knocky Parker. Golden Treasury of Ragtime, v. 1/4. four discs. Audiophile AP 89/92.

15. Knocky Parker. Old Rags. Audiophile AP 49.

Dr. John W. ("Knocky") Parker is now an English professor who plays ragtime piano for fun and relaxation. During the era of "Western Swing," he was the pianist for a number of Southwest jazz-infused country bands, where he developed a flowing style and a solid regimen. In these discs, he has come up with definitive editions of ragtime works by the masters. He has even recorded the complete piano works of Jelly Roll Morton, the man responsible for transforming the ragtime piano into the stride variety. The James Scott collection is from his 1903 - 1922 writing period, and it embraces 34 rags, all warmly recorded. The Joplin set has 50 tracks, including some rag marches. Recent discoveries indicate that this was not all of Joplin's material; thus, the appellative "complete" is no longer exact. Both sets have strong notes. The Treasury is a collection of rag music and rag-type tunes (such as cakewalks) from 1899-1913, arranged in chronological order. Parker is not alone this time, for he has good support from a combination of banjo, bass, brushes, and tuba. In some cases, he performs on the celeste and harpsichord, in a quite enchanting manner. Volume 1 covers 1899-1901 and includes "At a Georgia Camp Meeting," "Tickled to Death," and "Dusty Dudes" among its 16 selections. The 14 tracks from volume 2 cover 1902-1908 (the greatest time span in the set), and include "St. Louis Rag," "Hiawatha," "Tennessee Tantalizer," and "Florida Rag." Volume 3 is from 1908-1909, with "Dusty," "The Peach," "Poison Ivy Rag," and "Porcupine Rag" among the 15 tracks. Of particular interest is volume 4, 1910-1913, which illustrates the beginning of the decline of ragtime. Here are "Tar Babies," "Silver Bell," "Live Wires," and "Chatterbox Rag." These 16 cuts show signs of the commercial embellishments and ornamentations that began to intrude as Tin Pan Alley took over with what are known as "novelty rags." The last disc is mainly pre-1900 and rounds out the four-disc set. Parker's sensitive fingering does justice to such "old" rags as Joplin's "Fig Leaf" and Scott's "Froglegs" and "Climax Rag."

16. Joshua Rifkin. Joplin Piano Rags, v. 1/3. three discs. Nonesuch HB73026 and H71305.

Rifkin's first volume here was the disc that probably started the latest

revival of ragtime. Credibility for ragtime was gained because Nonesuch is a respected "classical" label, and it was once instrumental in spreading the baroque vogue of more than a decade ago. The label is accessible for it has national distribution, and it is widely discounted at inexpensive prices. Rifkin was Juilliard-trained, and here he displays superb touch and control. There is little variance from the original scores, and, in fact, he gives a very carefully balanced interpretation. These rags are played as they were meant to be played - in march time, rather than in dance time. Thus, there are no flashy displays of speed or dexterity as was once interpreted by the stride pianists. It was a shock to some people that "ragtime" was originally not equated to "ragged" or "honky tonk" music, but that it was a viable miniature art form that was scored and played as was any other "classical" piano music. In his time, Joplin was known as the Chopin of America. Included on these discs are: "The Maple Leaf Rag," "The Entertainer," "Ragtime Dance," "Euphonic Sounds," "Magnetic Rag," "Original Rags," and "The Cascades," among others. There are excellent liner notes by Rifkin.

(To be continued in a future issue of The Ragtimer.)

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## REMINISCING IN SYNCOPATION

The June 1963 issue of Music Memories Monthly was a "Special Ragtime Issue." Among the articles devoted to ragtime was one by Charles K. "Uncle Hump" Humphreeville, called "Reminiscing in Syncopation."

"Uncle Hump" played in the society orchestras of the early part of the 20th century - orchestras that played cakewalks, turkey trots, marches, one steps, two steps, rags, fox trots, waltzes and even barn dances. Here are some of Uncle Hump's musical memories:

My first engagement for pay was with a ragtime orchestra that played in Doc Cole's Umitilia Indian Medicine Show. I played the different rhythm instruments of the band, including guitar, banjo, a row of Moxie bottles, four cigar boxes (tuned C, F, D, and G like a xylophone), and drums. Lew Hall was pianist, and the trombonist, violinist, and cornetist were known only by nicknames, long since lost from memory. In addition to the band, there were about ten other entertainers in the troup such as "Hop-Waw," the Indian chief, Princess Lone Feather, and a papoose. I expect I heard some of the first ragtime at the performances we gave. "Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight" was currently popular (Editor - thus dating these performances back to 1897), and the band began each show backing Lew Hall in his own version of that tune. While we played, a young Negro boy, Sunshine, did a buck-and-wing dance, keeping time with our ragtime melodies.

Dances in those days were conducted much differently from ours today. Even dances that were open to the public (I played for both private and public dances) were always given under the rules of gentle society. The orchestras I played in

for these dances ragged all of the popular two-steps that were the current mode. Even playing waltzes and popular songs, we used such ragtime characteristics as syncopation. Believe me, some of those performances were gems. "Lassus Trombone," "Too Much Mustard," "Happy Heine," and "Dill Pickles" were all very popular numbers. When a two-step circle was announced, we began playing a medley of tunes that did not tire you out too much, for at times, when these circles were extra good (that is, when everybody got into the spirit of the dance), it lasted for an hour or so.

I could go on and on about the dances that were in vogue at the turn of the century, but I will talk about only a few. The Schottische was a beautiful and graceful dance that required a lot of practice to execute properly. Also beautiful but difficult were the Dip, the Glide, and the Hesitation. Then there was a dance that started "modern" dances. There was a tune we played called "Alexander's Ragtime Ball" (not to be confused with "Alexander's Ragtime Band") that was popular with the younger element. It was a lively thing, so the youngsters invented a dance called the "FISH-WALK", a body swaying dance step later to be changed into the well-known "one-step". Then of course was the Grand March of a dance, which started out as a type of march - two step and finished up with a modified cakewalk.

The orchestras I was in would play all different kinds of songs and dances, depending on who we were performing for. For example, an Indian Intermezzo (such as "Red Wing") was a good "get-acquainted" number at any dance. The Society Balls would necessitate waltzes, polkas, and the like, along with an occasional rag or cakewalk. Vice-versa for the public dances and side shows such as the Medicine show described above. When playing for a lodge or club, we threw in an old square-dance or two if everybody was happy and having a good time. With the piano taking the lead we would always get in a popular rag or cakewalk.

The general make-up of a ragtime orchestra consisted of a piano, fiddle, clarinet, cornet, flute, drums, and bass fiddle. Strange as it may sound, the trap drummer and bass fiddler were considered important parts of the ragtime orchestra in those days. The trap drums augmented every variation in expression and the bass fiddle could be depended on for background of tone either in spirited or serious music. In fact, a good bass player was really the foundation of the ragtime and society orchestra.

* * *

Surprising as it may be, the ragtime orchestra was an important part of the circus. I have played in many circus orchestras and enjoyed every minute of it. I shall now try to recall my work with the circus.

It had rained for three days as we pulled into town. The lot we were to use was soggy and deep with pools of nice wet rain. But with the "show-must-go-on" spirit, the layout and canvas men had everything laid out as the cook tent went up.

Then the wagons were prepared for the parade so that they would reach Main Street promptly at noon. While this was taking place, the hired hands along with everybody else who was available would put up the tents. Tho a musician, I have helped put up many a canvas in my younger years. Along with tumblers and rope-walkers, I have carried seats and standards with mud up to my ankles. After all, the show must go on.

After a quick lunch of good food (without napkins or toothpicks), we just had time to join the circus wagons for the parade. This happened each day, rain or shine, and somehow it never got to be a bore.

If the circus band happened to get a new member, all of us tried to blow his head off. It was our way of welcoming him! Should he happen to be a cornet or slide man, he retaliated by showing us just how it was done in the band he had just left. While we were playing in the parade, the sun came out for the first time in three days. Everyone picked up the gay spirit and we thrilled the crowd.

Back to the music! The stuff we played was strictly circus music, naturally. We would play the introduction, wait a while, then play a number of gallops. All the while, the clown band (mostly amateur musicians) would be playing the faster ragtime stuff. The clown band would warm up the cash customers and made 'em bring the kiddies.

Entering the lot, we would quickly put on our high class uniforms and moved to the band stand waiting for the grand entree. At the whistle, we headed the spectacle as it went its way around the main ring. We were followed by "glitter," pretty girls, elephants, horses, and talent mounted atop fine wagons, when all at once every ring was occupied and the show was on!

We would play different types of music to accompany the different acts. The bass drum was featured when the walking horse did his stuff (this kept him in step). A waltz was played for the girls on the swinging ladders. Then of course, "America" as a girl held aloft the flag at the pyramid of horses. When the clowns came on, a lively rag or cakewalk was only natural. And a gallop for the proper effect in the lariot act.

After the show, it's time to move on. You do your part in taking everything down then hike to the tracks where you might get into a nice social crap game with an "at home" atmosphere, and when you hear the train of circus equipment and people whistle out of the town, you are at liberty to dream - and hope the lot in Augusta is dry.

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## SYNCOPATION KEY TO FOUNTAIN OF YOUTH?

Axel Christensen, in his column entitled "Chicago Syncopations" (Melody, 1918), quoted Jane Lamoureaux on "joyful jazz":

"After being regarded as music-mad musicians, infected with the virus of a violent form of musical insanity, which caused them to produce sounds more bewildering to the ears than the cubist or futurist painting were to the eyes, jazz orchestras and bands have jumped into profitable popularity.

"This joyful jazz music reflects the flickering, flying lights of intense nocturnal revels. It is marvelously syncopated, a kaleidoscope of sounds, alive with color, passion, savage rhythm, successfully luring the mind from contemplation and repose.

"I have seen gray-haired, dignified gentlemen and ladies succomb to its infectious, impulsive charm, stimulating them more surely than the most potent highballs ever concocted. Their feet flew more lightly over the polished floor, conventional pose was forgotten, for a few fleeting moments the fires of youth burned in their veins, flushed their cheeks and brightened their eyes.

"Through the delirious, delightfully care-free dance music played by the jazz orchestra me-thought I heard occasionally the soft purling of the fabled fountain of youth.

"The gray-haired ladies and gentlemen were dancing with the joyful abandon of lively youth. One breathless matron declared, 'I feel ten years younger.' She certainly looked it at that moment. Perhaps this wonderful feeling of revivified youthfulness which the invigorating music of a good jazz band inspires in part accounts for its unprecedented success."

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## SAMUEL J. STOKES, RAGTIME COMPOSER

We've recently received a letter from Samuel J. Stokes, Jr., concerning the ragtime music composed by his father between 1909 and 1914. Mr. Stokes is interested in having the eight complete numbers published as an album and distributed internationally, under the title "Stokes' New Orleans Ragtime Music Album." Since the Ragtime Society has published only single works, we are unable to help Mr. Stokes; but there may be a member of the Society who is better equipped than we are to publish the album.

Titles of the songs are: "Dynamite Rag," "I'll Change the Thorns to Roses," "O Lady Tell Me Where You Got Your Class," "Only You," "Salome Rag,"

"The North Pole Rag," "Thunderbolt Rag," and "You'll Never Miss Your Mother till the Day She's Gone Away."

According to Mr. Stokes, the album and some of the numbers have been copyrighted in the United States, and the international copyright has been applied for. Anyone interested in working with Mr. Stokes on this project should get in touch with him at Surpco Engineers, P. O. Box 392, Covington, Louisiana 70433.

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## CBC BROADCASTS BERGEN ARTS FESTIVAL

On August 3, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation broadcast a tape from the 1979 Bergen Arts Festival, featuring The New Excelsior Talking Machine, a London-based group. Among the numbers performed were "Ragtime Dance" (Joplin), "Tastime #5" (Artie Matthews), "Chrysanthemum" (Joplin), "Red Pepper," "Reindeer Rag" (Joseph Lamb), and "Sunflower Slow Drag."

Also featured as part of the Festival performance was a young tenor, Paul Elliott, who sang "He'd Have to Get Under - Get Out and Get Under," a 1913 hit about fixing an automobile. (The back cover of this issue reproduces the front of the sheet music for this tune.)

The performance was well worth hearing, and we feel that it would interest members of the Society. The CBC, which owns the tapes of the Festival, occasionally releases records based on its tapes. Perhaps, if Society members were to show their interest by writing to the CBC, we could persuade them to release a record of the 1979 Bergen Arts Festival. To register your interest in such a record, write to: CBC Learning Systems, Box 500, Terminal A, Toronto, Ontario.

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## ADDRESS CHANGE

Anyone interested in purchasing Thomas Vanden Eynden's rag, "Growing Pains," as mentioned in the March/April Ragtimer (p. 21), should use Thomas's new address, as follows:

Thomas Vanden Eynden
1 Lyman Circle
Shaker Heights, Ohio 44122

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# SOMETHING DOING...

JOHN ARPIN

Chelsea Inn, 33 Gerrard St. W., Toronto. In "The Piano Bar" M-F 5-8 p. m., and with his trio in "The Chelsea Bun" lounge M-S 9 p. m. to 1 a. m.

BRIAN AND KATHY BAUER

Rodeway Inn, 7001 Buffalo Ave., Niagara Falls, N. Y. Appearing with Lou "Al Jolson" Lasota and Fritz Raiser, every Friday from 9 p. m. to 1 a. m.

STEEN CHRISTENSEN

Mechanical Music Museum (MMM), Vesterbrodage 150, Copenhagen, Denmark. Performs the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month.

DON EWELL

Esplanade Lounge, Royal Orleans Hotel, New Orleans, La. A piano player par excellence - ragtime, Morton style, and Waller style.

DAVE FLOWITT

Brunswick Hotel, Brunswick St., Toronto. With Dr. McJazz Band, Thursday through Sat., 9 p. m. to 1 a. m.

Chelsea Inn, 33 Gerrard St. W., Toronto. With the Chelsea Chasers Trio and Dr. McJazz Band (alternating weeks), on Saturdays, 2-5 p. m.

ROBIN FROST

Olive Mill Bistro, 1295 Coast Village Road, Montecito (Santa Barbara), Calif. Frost plays with The Bistro All Stars, every Sunday 9:30 p. m. to 12:30 a. m.

ROBERT GOODNOW

Broadmoor Hotel, Colorado Springs, Colorado.

EDDIE GREEN

Proctor House Restaurant, Lowell St., Peabody, Mass. Green (known to Society members as Ed Greenberg) plays Wed., Thurs., Fri., and some

Saturdays. He doesn't play rags, but he enjoys ragtime and would like to meet any Ragtime Society members in the area.

RALPH GRUEGEL

Peabody's, Cedar and Taylor Road, Cleveland Heights, Ohio. With The Eagle Jazz Band, Friday, 8-12 p. m.

The Roadhouse, 8425 Old Route "8", Northfield Center, Ohio. Appearing on Saturdays.

JOHN HASSE

The Ordinary, Nashville, Indiana. Appearing Friday and Saturday nights.

TOM "JAZZOO" JONES

The Paddlewheel Bar, "Mississippi Queen," New Orleans to Vicksburg.

JIM KAPLAN

Pizza-Stein, 1428 W. Galena Ave., Freeport, Illinois. Appearing on Tuesday, Friday, and Sunday.

TOM LOUGH

Loose Caboose, KSU Eastway Center, Kent, Ohio. Jazz piano. Fridays, 4-8 p. m.

JOHNNY MADDOX

Il Porto Ristorante, 121 King St., Alexandria, Va. Appearing Tues. - Sun., 8:30 p. m. from June 5 through Sept. 23. Reservations: (703) 836-8833.

BOB MILNE

Charley's Crab Restaurant, Troy, Mich. (I-75 at Crook's Road. Exit). Appears 4 p. m. to 12:30 a. m. daily, including Sunday (alternating with Bob Seeley).

MIKE MONTGOMERY

Rathskeller, The Dakota Inn, John R. Road (north of McNichols), Detroit, Michigan. Appearing Friday nights.

NEW SUNSHINE JAZZ BAND

Biltmore Ballroom (upstairs), 1811 Columbia Rd., N.W., Washington, D. C. Appearing the 3rd Sunday and 1st Wednesday of every month, 9 p. m. - midnight.

DR. ELI NEWBERGER

Sticky Wicket Pub, West Main St., Hopkinton, Massachusetts. Appearing with the New Black Eagle Jazz Band (pianist, Bob Pilsbury), Thursdays, 8-12 p. m.

DARYL OTT

The Fishmarket Back Room, 106 King St., Alexandria, Virginia. Solo ragtime piano nightly, beginning June 4.

QUEEN CITY RAGTIME ENSEMBLE

Zeno's, 1421 Larimer, Denver, Colorado. Performs with the Queen City Jazz Band every Fri. and Sat., approx. 10 p. m.

BOB SEELEY

Charley's Crab Restaurant, Troy, Mich. (I-75 at Crook's Rd. Exit) Appears 4 p. m. to 12:30 a. m. daily, including Sunday (alternating with Bob Milne.)

RICHARD SKRIKA

Lee's Imperial Tavern, Riverside Drive, Windsor, Ontario. Pianist with the Eric Mannering New Imperial Jazz Band. Every Sat., 4 - 7 p. m.

TREBOR TICHENOR

Goldenrod Showboat, St. Louis, Missouri. Appears every Sat. night. Trebor also has a weekly radio show on KWMU-FM (90. 7), "Ragophile with Trebor Tichenor," Fridays, 7 - 8 p. m.

JERRY TRAUNIG

Brownstone Restaurant, Hartford, Connecticut.

TERRY WALDO

Crazy Horse Saloon, Bush Blvd., at Route 161 (near I-71), Columbus, Ohio. Appears with singer Susan Lamarche, Sundays, 8 p. m. to 1 a. m.

TEX WYNDHAM

The Green Room, Hotel DuPont, 11th & Market Sts., Wilmington, Dela. Appears with The Red Lion Jazz Band, 1st Friday every month, 8:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Phone (302) 656-8121.

PERFORMERS TO WATCH FOR!

EUBIE BLAKE performs frequently at concerts and festivals. He also makes guest appearances on TV talk shows and radio programs. Watch your local paper - don't miss Eubie!

PETER FAHRENHOLTZ tours regularly in Denmark (and occasionally in other European countries). He plays solo ragtime and also with bands.

GLENN MEYER makes regular appearances with his band in the St. Louis, Missouri, area.

MAX MORATH is on the road with "The Ragtime Years." Watch for it!

TOM NOEL is on the road with two living portrayal shows: "Mark Twain at Home" and "Mr. Jelly Lord," the latter based on the life of Jelly Roll Morton.

RAGTIME RADIO

TREBOR TICHENOR has a weekly show called "Ragophile with Trebor Tichenor," on KWMU-FM (90. 7, St. Louis, Missouri), Fridays, 7 - 8 p. m.

HANK TROY's ragtime program is on KVOD-FM (Denver, Colorado), Tuesdays, 6:30 - 7:00 p. m.

TERRY WALDO hosts "This Is Ragtime" on National Public Radio. Check your local listings for this weekly half-hour show.

GALEN WILKES presents "The Ragtime Years," a weekly half-hour show, on WVHC-FM (88. 7, Hempstead, Long Island, N. Y. ), on Tuesdays, 9 - 9:30 p. m.

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## RAGTIME '79 AT TORONTO'S HARBOURFRONT

Toronto's Harbourfront recently staged "Ragtime '79," a series of ragtime concerts in a cabaret setting, culminating in a piano play-off. The three-evening event (Wednesday, July 11, to Friday, July 13) featured performers well known to members of the Ragtime Society: "Ragtime" Bob Darch, a ragtime piano player and balladeer whose repertoire consists of over 200 original rags and covers the ragtime era from 1896 to 1920, has recorded eight albums and is credited with bringing Eubie Blake out of retirement; Terry Waldo, ragtime piano player and antiquarian entertainer, has eight recordings to his credit and is the author of This Is Ragtime, published in 1976. In addition to Bob and Terry, Ragtime '79 introduced ragtime chanteuse Susan La Marche, an innocent-looking waif with a delicious sense of slightly risque humor.

A few of the numbers presented at the concerts were: "Sweetheart, If You Talk in Your Sleep, Don't Mention My Name," "You Been a Good Old Wagon, Daddy, But You Done Broke Down," and "Where Did Robinson Crusoe Go with Friday on Saturday Night?"

Terry and Susan have a new album called "Jazz Babies" (Dirty Shame Records, 1979), which includes their versions of "Ragtime Cowboy Joe" and "Maple Leaf Rag" plus twelve other jazz, vaudeville, and ragtime tunes.

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## SHEET MUSIC AUCTION

Joel Markowitz, of Port Washington, New York, has just sent us an announcement of a mail-order auction of sheet music, the first of what he hopes will be a series of auctions. Unfortunately, the announcement reached us too late to be included in the July/August Ragtimer, and our mention of it here will be too late for our readers to respond, since Joel's closing date was September 14, 1979.

The catalog for the auction lists 462 items available, giving title, composer, copyright date, publisher, description, and condition for each item. Anyone interested in hearing about future sheet music auctions should write Joel at Box 367, Port Washington, New York, 11050, or call him at (212) 445-7685.

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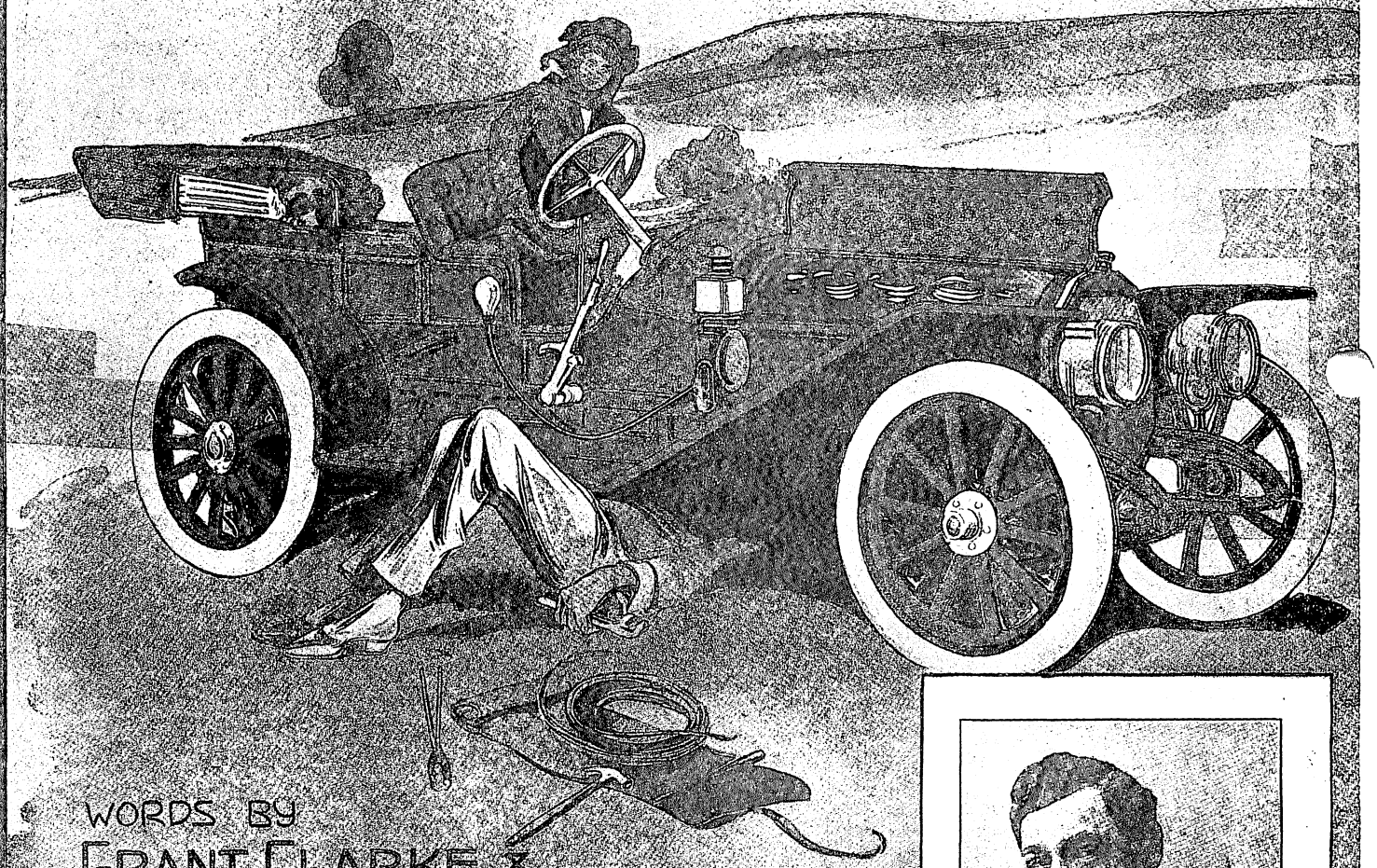
BOBBY NORTH'S TERRIFIC HIT!

# HE'D HAVE TO GET UNDER-GET OUT AND GET UNDER

## (TO FIX UP HIS AUTOMOBILE)



WORDS BY
GRANT CLARKE &
EDGAR LESLIE

MUSIC BY
MAURICE ABRAHAMS

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BOBBY NORTH